



United States Mission to the OSCE

Statement on ODIHR Final Report on Parliamentary Elections in Uzbekistan

As delivered by Ambassador Stephan M. Minikes
to the Permanent Council, Vienna
March 17, 2005

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The United States has read ODIHR's conclusions regarding Parliamentary elections held in Uzbekistan on 26 December 2004, and notes that the report points to several modest improvements over previous elections.

These improvements include the introduction of more transparent methods for nominating candidates, improvements in counting procedures, and a requirement that women comprise 30 percent of the candidates on party lists.

We must concur, however, with the report's findings, that these elections ultimately fell short of international standards and Uzbekistan's OSCE commitments, and failed to bring about a transparent and pluralistic result.

The report cites an absence of fundamental freedoms, such as freedom of assembly and freedom of expression. It also notes that the participation of five political parties did very little to offer the electorate a competitive choice, as the differences between them were not significant. These and other shortcomings, as the report confirms, marred the process and its outcome.

The United States reaffirms its commitment to assisting Uzbekistan in fulfilling its OSCE commitments, including those pertaining to elections as defined in the 1990 Copenhagen document.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.